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United States Senate

COMMITTEES:
COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION
ENERGY AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
FOREIGN RELATIONS

July 17, 2020

Christopher A. Wray
Director
FBI Headquarters
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20535-0001

Dear Director Wray:

I write to urge that your agency pursue immediate additional efforts to bolster our national cybersecurity infrastructure against threats from Russia and China, particularly as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recently the United Kingdom's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) released a report outlining Russian interference in COVID-19 vaccine development, including ongoing efforts Russian-espionage-linked APT29 ("Cozy Bear") has undertaken to steal intellectual property and disrupt critical COVID-19 research.

That report included a warning that APT29 "is likely to continue to target organisations [sic] involved in COVID-19 vaccine research and development, as they seek to answer additional intelligence questions relating to the pandemic." There are also indicators of compromise and detection rules as well as mitigation protocol included in the report.

On May 13, 2020, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) announced concern about threats from Chinese government-backed hackers working to disrupt COVID-19 research. Today's announcement of similar Russian interference, while unsurprising, is deeply concerning and yet another example of unacceptable subversive activity.

Thankfully your agency works closely with CISA to understand the global threats landscape and protect critical U.S. infrastructure. I am urging you to redouble your efforts with CISA and our international partners to protect against these and similar threats.

In light of these serious threats, I am also urging CISA to work directly with potentially impacted U.S. entities engaged in COVID-19 research that may have suffered breaches related to either Russian or Chinese state-based hacks. Without adequate Federal support, these attacks pose serious risks to our national critical infrastructure in the healthcare sector and beyond.

Russia and China have a long history of using state-backed entities to disrupt U.S. initiatives across a range of fields. This is one of many reasons I have advocated listing Russia as a state sponsor of terror and will continue to advocate increased pressure on China, as well. The Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (Public Law 115-409), which I authored, authorized \$500 million for cybersecurity cooperation to combat malicious actors in cyberspace.

The successful pursuit of a COVID-19 vaccine will benefit the entire world, not just those living in the United States. Ensuring proper assistance to U.S. universities, laboratories, and our international partners in these efforts is critical to making the world a safer place. I look forward to staying in contact on these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cory Gardner", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cory Gardner
U.S. Senator